

BURGHOUND.COM®

THE ULTIMATE BURGUNDY REFERENCE

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Statement of Principles

It is important that readers understand how I collect and evaluate the information that is reported in the pages of **Burghound.com** (the tasting notes and information are the sole responsibility of the author).

- I am personally responsible for all of my business expenses without exception. This includes airfare, hotels and effectively all of my meals. The purpose is as clear as it is simple: No conflicts of interest. *I do not accept nor do I seek any subsidy, in any form, from anybody.*
- Sample bottles are accepted for evaluation and commentary, much as book reviewers accept advance copies of new releases. I insist, however, that these sample bottles represent the final wines to be sold under that particular label.
- Finished, bottled wines are assigned scores as these wines are market-ready. Wines tasted from barrel, however, are scored within a range. This reflects the reality that a wine tasted from barrel is not a finished product.
- Wines are evaluated within the context of their *appellations*. Simply put, that means I expect a *grand cru* Burgundy to reflect its exalted status.

While the concept of *terroir* remains a controversial issue in the opinion of many people, it is not controversial to the Burgundian mindset—or to me, either. I attempt to convey, where appropriate, how certain wines are particularly good, or particularly bad, at expressing their underlying *terroir*.

This is admittedly a difficult thing, rightly open to discussion among the Burgundians themselves, never mind an outside observer such as myself. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to great Burgundy. Mere "hedonism" is just that: empty pleasure seeking. Burgundy can deliver so much more—if it is asked.

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A Brief Word About Scores:

Numerical scores are endlessly debated among wine lovers. Inevitably, critics tend to emphasize certain characteristics at the expense of others. What follows is an explication of scores at **Burghound.com** and the underlying taste values they reflect.

Simply put, Burgundies that emphasize purity, elegance, overall balance and a clear expression of the underlying *terroir* are rated more highly than Burgundies that don't deliver these qualities. Other important characteristics include typicity, richness, balanced extraction, length and harmony. For example, a Volnay should taste like a Volnay and a *grand cru* should deliver a *grand cru* drinking experience.

The score is a summation of the taster's thoughts about a wine. It does not actually express those thoughts. Clearly, a mere number cannot fully represent the nuanced, detailed impression conveyed by a tasting note.

Please note: Wines are scored based on their expected quality at peak drinkability. Many *grands crus* that will, I believe, "be" a 92 may not necessarily taste like a 92-point wine when young, thanks to the prominent tannins or general inaccessibility.

Wines rated 90 points or above are worth a special effort to find and cellar. Wines rated 85 or above are recommended, **especially among regional and villages level wines**. There will be relatively few 90+ point wines, simply because there are relatively few outstanding and superlative wines. Finished, bottled wines are assigned specific scores as these wines are market-ready. Wines tasted from barrel are scored within a range. This reflects the reality that a wine tasted from barrel is not a finished, market-ready product.

95 – 100:	Truly incomparable and emotionally thrilling. A wine so rated is as good as Burgundy gets. By definition, it is reference standard for its <i>appellation</i> .
90 – 94:	Outstanding. Worth a special effort to purchase and cellar and will provide memorable drinking experiences.
85 – 89:	Good to High quality. Burgundies that offer solid quality in every respect and generally very good typicity. "Good Value" wines will often fall into this category. Worth your attention.
80 – 84:	Average to Good quality. The wine is "correct", displays no noticeable flaws and will provide pleasing, if straightforward, drinking.
76 – 79:	Barely Acceptable quality. The wine is not worth your attention nor is it a good value.
75 and Below:	Don't Bother. A wine with noticeable, irremediable flaws.

Estimated Maturities:

Estimating a window of when any given Burgundy will be at its peak is an extremely difficult thing to do with precision. The time frames that you see after the score is my best estimate as to when any given wine will likely be at its best. This is of course simply an educated guess about how the wine will evolve and assumes that the wine will have been responsibly shipped and stored, which as long-time collectors know is not always the case. Just as importantly, the time suggested windows are based on how I personally prefer my Burgundies. This effectively means that for reds, there is still obvious freshness and vibrancy remaining to both the fruit and the flavors and while the tannic structure will be largely resolved, it by no means suggests that a completely smooth palate will exist devoid of any firmness. Especially tannic and or concentrated wines will necessarily have wider windows for obvious reasons. For whites, the windows are designed to indicate that point at which youthful fruit has passed into secondary nuances with more fully developed complexity as well as when the textures have rounded out and the sometimes pointed acidity has mellowed. **Important note:** what the estimated maturities do NOT suggest is how long a wine will remain structurally sound and still capable of providing some enjoyment as many Burgundies are capable of remarkably long periods of graceful decline; however, beyond a certain point they will have passed their peaks and should be drunk, no matter how intellectually interesting they may be. As with anything this subjective, there is no substitute for your own experience and I offer these estimated maturities as a general guideline, not gospel and as the saying goes, your mileage may vary.

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Freeman Vineyard & Winery (Sebastopol, CA)

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Freeman was founded in 2001 by Akiko and Ken Freeman. The family owned and run operation, together with winemaker Ed Kurtzman, produces about 5,500 cases annually; the wines are bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. The Freemans recently acquired a new 50-acre property, originally known as the Montafi Ranch and have been preparing the soil for a future vineyard that will be called Freeman Ranch, which will be planted primarily to pinot. They are also beginning the 3-year process required for organic certification. Because they are conservation supporters, they have donated 24 acres to the Bodega Land Trust so the land will be preserved in its natural state. For further information, contact Akiko and Ken Freeman: (415) 831-4756 or visit: www.freemanwinery.com.

2007 Pinot Noir – Sonoma Coast: (bottled at 14.1%). A notably ripe nose of violets, plum, blue berry and hints of cassis merges into delicious, fresh and generous medium-bodied flavors that possess good richness and lovely balance with excellent depth and length. This doesn’t have the complexity of the Akiko’s and there is still a touch of unabsorbed wood on the finish but it’s not enough to detract from the overall sense of appeal and certainly not enough to dry out the wine if you elect to cellar if for the longer-term. Speaking of which, this is one of those wines that could easily be enjoyed now as the balance is so good or, if preferred, it could be successfully cellared for 5 to 7 years. Very good juice. 90/2013+

2007 Pinot Noir – Akiko’s Cuvée: (from Sonoma Coast fruit; bottled at 14.2%). Here the nose is not quite as ripe as the Sonoma Coast yet it is at once more elegant and more nuanced with extremely pretty floral and spice suffused red pinot and plummy fruit that gracefully merges into the fresh, delicious, pure and impeccably well-balanced medium-bodied flavors that are rich yet possess a lovely sense of tension and restraint on the clean, lingering and dusty finish. Moreover, not only is this a genuinely lovely effort, it’s also quite stylish as the harmony of expression is most admirable. If you can find it, buy it – you’ll thank me. 92/2013+